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# ANDROMEDA,

## AND OTHER POEMS:

By CHARLES KINGSLEY,

AUTHOR OF "AMYAS LEIGH," "TWO YEARS AGO," &C.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
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To my Wife.

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# ANDROMEDA.

# ANDROMEDA.

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Over the sea, past Crete, on the Syrian shore to the southward,

Dwells in the well-tilled lowland a dark-haired Æthiop people,

Skilful with needle and loom, and the arts of the dyer and carver,

Skilful, but feeble of heart; for they know not the lords of Olympus,

Lovers of men; neither broad-browed Zeus, nor Pallas Athené,

Teacher of wisdom to heroes, bestower of might in the battle;

Share not the cunning of Hermes, nor list to the songs of Apollo.

Fearing the stars of the sky, and the roll of the blue salt water,

Fearing all things that have life in the womb of the seas and the rivers,

Eating no fish to this day, nor ploughing the main, like the Phœnics,

Manful with black-beaked ships, they abide in a sorrowful region,

Vexed with the earthquake, and flame, and the sea-floods, scourge of Poseidon.

Whelming the dwellings of men, and the toils of the slow-footed oxen,

Drowning the barley and flax, and the hard-earned gold of the harvest,

Up to the hillside vines, and the pastures skirting the woodland,

Inland the floods came yearly; and after the waters a monster,

Bred of the slime, like the worms which are bred from the muds of the Nile-bank,

Shapeless, a terror to see; and by night it swam out to the seaward,
Daily returning to feed with the dawn, and devoured of the fairest,
Cattle, and children, and maids, till the terrified people fled inland.
Fasting in sackcloth and ashes they came, both the king and his people,
Came to the mountain of oaks, to the house of the terrible sea-gods,
Hard by the gulf in the rocks, where of old the world-wide deluge
Sank to the inner abyss; and the lake where the fish of the goddess
Holy, undying, abide; whom the priests feed daily with dainties.
There to the mystical fish, high-throned in her chamber of cedar,
Burnt they the fat of the flock; till the flame shone far to the seaward.

Three days fasting they prayed: but the fourth day the priests of the goddess

Cunning in spells, cast lots, to discover the crime of the people.

All day long they cast, till the house of the monarch was taken,

Cepheus, king of the land; and the faces of all gathered blackness.

Then once more they cast; and Cassiopœia was taken,

Deep-bosomed wife of the king, whom oft far-seeing Apollo

Watched well-pleased from the welkin, the fairest of Æthiop women:

Fairest, save only her daughter; for down to the ankle her tresses

Rolled, blue-black as the night, ambrosial, joy to beholders.

Awful and fair she arose, most like in her coming to Hebe,

Queen before whom the Immortals arise, as she comes on Olympus,
Out of the chamber of gold, which her son Hephæstos has wrought her.
Such in her stature and eyes, and the broad white light of her forehead
Stately she came from her place, and she spoke in the midst of the people.
'Pure are my hands from blood: most pure this heart in my bosom.
Yet one fault I remember this day; one word have I spoken;
Rashly I spoke on the shore, and I dread lest the sea should have heard it.
Watching my child at her bath, as she plunged in the joy of her girlhood,
Fairer I called her in pride than Atergati, queen of the ocean.
Judge ye if this be my sin, for I know none other.'
She ended;

Wrapping her head in her mantle she stood, and the people were silent.

Answered the dark-browed priests, 'No word, once spoken, returneth

Even if uttered unwitting. Shall gods excuse our rashness?

That which is done, that abides; and the wrath of the sea is against us;

Hers, and the wrath of her brother, the Sun-god, lord of the sheepfolds.

Fairer than her hast thou boasted thy daughter? Ah folly! for hateful,

Hateful are they to the gods, whoso, impious, liken a mortal,

Fair though he be, to their glory; and hateful is that which is likened,

Grieving the eyes of their pride, and abominate, doomed to their anger.

What shall be likened to gods? The unknown, who deep in the darkness

Ever abide, twyformed, many-handed, terrible, shapeless.
Woe to the queen; for the land is defiled, and the people accursed.
Take thou her therefore by night, thou ill-starred Cassiopœia,
Take her with us in the night, when the moon sinks low to the westward;
Bind her aloft for a victim, a prey for the gorge of the monster,
Far on the sea-girt rock, which is washed by the surges for ever;
So may the goddess accept her, and so may the land make atonement,
Purged by her blood from its sin: so obey thou the doom of the rulers.'

Bitter in soul they went out, Cepheus and Cassiopœia,
Bitter in soul; and their hearts whirled round, as the leaves in the eddy.
Weak was the queen, and rebelled: but the king, like a shepherd of people,

Willed not the land should waste; so he yielded the life of his daughter.

Deep in the wane of the night, as the moon sank low to the westward,

They by the shade of the cliffs, with the horror of darkness around them,

Stole, as ashamed, to a deed which became not the light of the sunshine,

Slowly, the priests, and the queen, and the virgin bound in the galley.

Slowly they rowed to the rocks: but Cepheus far in the palace

Sate in the midst of the hall, on his throne, like a shepherd of people,

Choking his woe, dry-eyed, while the slaves wailed loudly around him.

They on the sea-girt rock, which is washed by the surges for ever,

Set her in silence, the guiltless, aloft with her face to the eastward.

Under a crag of the stone, where a ledge sloped down to the water;

There they set Andromeden, most beautiful, shaped like a goddess,

Lifting her long white arms wide-spread to the walls of the basalt,

Chaining them, ruthless, with brass; and they called on the might of the Rulers.

'Mystical fish of the seas, dread Queen whom Æthiops honour,

Whelming the land in thy wrath, unavoidable, sharp as the sting-ray,

Thou, and thy brother the Sun, brain-smiting, lord of the sheepfold,

Scorching the earth all day, and then resting at night in thy bosom,

Take ye this one life for many, appeased by the blood of a maiden,

Fairest, and born of the fairest, a queen, most priceless of victims.'

Thrice they spat as they went by the maid: but her mother delaying

Fondled her child to the last, heart-crushed; and the warmth of her weeping

Fell on the breast of the maid, as her woe broke forth into wailing.

'Daughter! my daughter! forgive me! O curse not the murderess! Curse not!

How have I sinned, but in love? Do the gods grudge glory to mothers?

Loving I bore thee in vain in the fate-cursed bride-bed of Cepheus,

Loving I fed thee and tended, and loving rejoiced in thy beauty,

Blessing thy limbs as I bathed them, and blessing thy locks as I combed them;

Decking thee, ripening to woman, I blest thee: yet blessing I slew thee!

How have I sinned, but in love? O swear to me, swear to thy mother,

Never to haunt me with curse, as I go to the grave in my sorrow,

Childless and lone: may the gods never send me another, to slay it!

See, I embrace thy knees—soft knees, where no babe will be fondled—

Swear to me never to curse me, the hapless one, not in the death-pang.'

Weeping she clung to the knees of the maid; and the maid low answered—

'Curse thee! Not in the death-pang!' The heart of the lady was lightened.

Slowly she went by the ledge; and the maid was alone in the darkness.

Watching the pulse of the oars die down, as her own died with them,

Tearless, dumb with amaze she stood, as a storm-stunned nestling

Fallen from bough or from eave lies dumb, which the home-going herdsman

Fancies a stone, till he catches the light of its terrified
eyeball.
So through the long long hours the maid stood helpless
and hopeless,
Wide-eyed, downward gazing in vain at the black blank
darkness.
Feebly at last she began, while wild thoughts bubbled
within her—
'Guiltless I am: why thus then? Are gods more
ruthless than mortals?
Have they no mercy for youth? no love for the souls
who have loved them?
Even as I loved thee, dread sea, as I played by thy
margin,
Blessing thy wave as it cooled me, thy wind as it breathed
on my forehead,
Bowing my head to thy tempest, and opening my heart
to thy children,
Silvery fish, wreathed shell, and the strange lithe things
of the water,

Tenderly casting them back, as they gasped on the beach in the sunshine,

Home to their mother—in vain! for mine sits childless in anguish!

Oh dread sea! false sea! I dreamed what I dreamed of thy goodness;

Dreamed of a smile in thy gleam, of a laugh in the plash of thy ripple:

False and devouring thou art, and the great world dark and despiteful.'

Awed by her own rash words she was still: and her eyes to the seaward

Looked for an answer of wrath: far off, in the heart of the darkness,

Bright white mists rose slowly; beneath them the wandering ocean

Glimmered and glowed to the deepest abyss; and the knees of the maiden

Trembled and sank in her fear, as afar, like a dawn in the midnight,

Rose from their seaweed chamber the choir of the mystical sea-maids.

Onward toward her they came, and her heart beat loud at their coming,

Watching the bliss of the gods, as they wakened the cliffs with their laughter.

Onward they came in their joy, and before them the roll of the surges

Sank, as the breeze sank dead, into smooth green foam-flecked marble,

Awed; and the crags of the cliff, and the pines of the mountain were silent.

Onward they came in their joy, and around them the lamps of the sea nymphs,

Myriad fiery globes, swam panting and heaving; and rainbows

Crimson and azure and emerald, were broken in star-showers, lighting

Far through the wine-dark depths of the crystal, the gardens of Nereus,

Coral and sea-fan and tangle, the blooms and the palms of the ocean.

Onward they came in their joy, more white than the foam which they scattered,

Laughing and singing, and tossing and twining, while eager, the Tritons

Blinded with kisses their eyes, unreproved, and above them in worship

Hovered the terns, and the seagulls swept past them on silvery pinions

Echoing softly their laughter; around them the wantoning dolphins

Sighed as they plunged, full of love; and the great seahorses which bore them

Curved up their crests in their pride to the delicate arms of the maidens,

Pawing the spray into gems, till a fiery rainfall, unharming,

Sparkled and gleamed on the limbs of the nymphs, and the coils of the mermen.

Onward they went in their joy, bathed round with the fiery coolness,
Needing nor sun nor moon, self-lighted, immortal: but others,
Pitiful, floated in silence apart; in their bosoms the sea-boys,
Slain by the wrath of the seas, swept down by the anger of Nereus;
Hapless, whom never again on strand or on quay shall their mothers
Welcome with garlands and vows to the temple, but wearily pining
Gaze over island and bay for the sails of the sunken; they heedless
Sleep in soft bosoms for ever, and dream of the surge and the sea-maids.
Onward they past in their joy; on their brows neither sorrow nor anger;
Self-sufficing, as gods, never heeding the woe of the maiden.

She would have shrieked for their mercy: but shame made her dumb; and their eyeballs

Stared on her careless and still, like the eyes in the house of the idols.

Seeing they saw not, and passed, like a dream, on the murmuring ripple.

Stunned by the wonder she gazed, wide-eyed, as the glory departed.

'Oh fair shapes! far fairer than I! Too fair to be ruthless!

Gladden mine eyes once more with your splendour, unlike to my fancies;

You, then, smiled in the sea-gleam, and laughed in the plash of the ripple.

Awful I deemed you and formless; inhuman, monstrous as idols;

Lo, when ye came, ye were women, more loving and lovelier, only;

Like in all else; and I blest you: why blest ye not me for my worship?

Had you no mercy for me, the guiltless? Ye pitied the sea-boys,

Why not me, then, more hapless by far? Does your sight and your knowledge

End with the marge of the waves? Is the world which ye dwell in not our world?'

Over the mountain aloft ran a rush and a roll and a roaring;

Downward the breeze came indignant, and leapt with a howl to the water,

Roaring in cranny and crag, till the pillars and clefts of the basalt

Rang like a god-swept lyre, and her brain grew mad with the noises;

Crashing and lapping of waters, and sighing and tossing of weed-beds,

Gurgle and whisper and hiss of the foam, while thundering surges

Boomed in the wave-worn halls, as they champed at the roots of the mountain.

Hour after hour in the darkness the wind rushed fierce to the landward,
Drenching the maiden with spray; she shivering, weary and drooping,
Stood with her heart full of thoughts, till the foam-crests gleamed in the twilight,
Leaping and laughing around, and the east grew red with the dawning.
Then on the ridge of the hills rose the broad bright sun in his glory,
Hurling his arrows abroad on the glittering crests of the surges,
Gilding the soft round bosoms of wood, and the downs of the coastland,
Gilding the weeds at her feet, and the foam-laced teeth of the ledges,
Showing the maiden her home through the veil of her locks, as they floated
Glistening, damp with the spray, in a long black cloud to the landward.

High in the far-off glens rose thin blue curls from the homesteads;

Softly the low of the herds, and the pipe of the out-going herdsman,

Slid to her ear on the water, and melted her heart into weeping.

Shuddering, she tried to forget them; and straining her eyes to the seaward,

Watched for her doom, as she wailed, but in vain, to the terrible Sun-god.

'Dost thou not pity me, Sun, though thy wild dark sister be ruthless,

Dost thou not pity me here, as thou seest me desolate, weary,

Sickened with shame and despair, like a kid torn young from its mother?

What if my beauty insult thee, then blight it: but me—Oh spare me!

Spare me yet, ere he be here, fierce, tearing, unbearable! See me,

See me, how tender and soft, and thus helpless! See how I shudder,

Fancying only my doom. Wilt thou shine thus bright, when it takes me?

Are there no deaths save this, great Sun? No fiery arrow,

Lightning, or deep-mouthed wave? Why thus? What music in shrieking,

Pleasure in warm live limbs torn slowly? And dar'st thou behold them!

Oh, thou hast watched worse deeds! All sights are alike to thy brightness!

What if thou waken the birds to their song, dost thou waken no sorrow;

Waken no sick to their pain; no captive to wrench at his fetters?

Smile on the garden and fold, and on maidens who sing at the milking;

Flash into tapestried chambers, and peep in the eyelids of lovers,

Showing the blissful their bliss—Dost love, then, the place where thou smilest?

Lovest thou cities aflame, fierce blows, and the shrieks of the widow?

Lovest thou corpse-strewn fields, as thou lightest the path of the vulture?

Lovest thou these, that thou gazest so gay on my tears, and my mother's,

Laughing alike at the horror of one, and the bliss of another?

What dost thou care, in thy sky, for the joys and sorrows of mortals?

Colder art thou than the nymphs: in thy broad bright eye is no seeing.

Hadst thou a soul—as much soul as the slaves in the house of my father,

Wouldst thou not save? Poor thralls! they pitied me, clung to me weeping,

Kissing my hands and my feet—What are gods, more ruthless than mortals?

Worse than the souls which they rule? Let me die: they war not with ashes!'

Sudden she ceased, with a shriek: in the spray, like a hovering foam-bow,

Hung, more fair than the foam-bow, a boy in the bloom of his manhood,

Golden-haired, ivory-limbed, ambrosial; over his shoulder

Hung for a veil of his beauty the gold-fringed folds of the goat-skin,

Bearing the brass of his shield, as the sun flashed clear on its clearness.

Curved on his thigh lay a falchion; and under the gleam of his helmet

Eyes more blue than the main shone awful, around him Athené

Shed in her love such grace, such state, and terrible daring.

Hovering over the water he came, upon glittering pinions,

Living, a wonder, outgrown from the tight-laced gold of his sandals;

Bounding from billow to billow, and sweeping the crests like a sea-gull;

Leaping the gulfs of the surge, as he laughed in the joy of his leaping.

Fair and majestic he sprang to the rock; and the maiden in wonder

Gazed for awhile, and then hid in the dark-rolling wave of her tresses,

Fearful, the light of her eyes; while the boy (for her sorrow had awed him)

Blushed at her blushes, and vanished, like mist on the cliffs at the sunrise.

Fearful at length she looked forth: he was gone: she, wild with amazement,

Wailed for her mother aloud: but the wail of the wind only answered.

Sudden he flashed into sight, by her side; in his pity and anger

Moist were his eyes; and his breath like a rose-bed, as bolder and bolder,

Hovering under her brows, like a swallow that haunts by the house-eaves,

Delicate-handed, he lifted the veil of her hair; while the maiden

Motionless, frozen with fear, wept loud; till his lips unclosing

Poured from their pearl-strung portal the musical wave of his wonder.

'Ah,' well spoke she, the wise one, the grey-eyed Pallas Athené,—

'Known to Immortals alone are the prizes which lie for the heroes

Ready prepared at their feet; for requiring a little, the rulers

Pay back the loan tenfold to the man who, careless of pleasure,

Thirsting for honour and toil, fares forth on a perilous errand

Led by the guiding of gods, and strong in the strength of Immortals.

Thus have they led me to thee: from afar, unknowing, I marked thee,

Shining, a snow-white cross on the dark-green walls of the sea-cliff;

Carven in marble I deemed thee, a perfect work of the craftsman.

Likeness of Amphitrité, or far-famed Queen Cythereia.

Curious I came, till I saw how thy tresses streamed in the sea-wind,

Glistening, black as the night, and thy lips moved slow in thy wailing.

Speak again now—Oh speak! For my soul is stirred to avenge thee;

Tell me what barbarous horde, without law, unrighteous and heartless,

Hateful to gods and to men, thus have bound thee, a shame to the sunlight,

Scorn and prize to the sailor: but my prize now; for a coward,

Coward and shameless were he, who so finding a glorious jewel

Cast on the wayside by fools, would not win it and keep it and wear it,
Even as I will thee; for I swear by the head of my father,
Bearing thee over the sea-wave, to wed thee in Argos the fruitful,
Beautiful, meed of my toil no less than this head which I carry,
Hidden here fearful—Oh speak!'
But the maid, still dumb with amazement,
Watered her bosom with weeping, and longed for her home and her mother.
Beautiful, eager, he wooed her, and kissed off her tears as he hovered,
Roving at will, as a bee, on the brows of a rock nymph-haunted,
Garlanded over with vine, and acanthus, and clambering roses,
Cool in the fierce still noon, where streams glance clear in the mossbeds,

Hums on from blossom to blossom, and mingles the sweets as he tastes them.

Beautiful, eager, he kissed her, and clasped her yet closer and closer,

Praying her still to speak—

'Not cruel nor rough did my mother

Bear me to broad-browed Zeus in the depths of the brass-covered dungeon;

Neither in vain, as I think, have I talked with the cunning of Hermes,

Face unto face, as a friend; or from grey-eyed Pallas Athené

Learnt what is fit, and respecting myself, to respect in my dealings

Those whom the gods should love; so fear not; to chaste espousals

Only I woo thee, and swear, that a queen, and alone without rival

By me thou sittest in Argos of Hellas, throne of my fathers,

Worshipped by fair-haired kings: why callest thou still on thy mother?

Why did she leave thee thus here? For no foeman has bound thee; no foeman

Winning with strokes of the sword such a prize, would so leave it behind him.'

Just as at first some colt, wild-eyed, with quivering nostril,

Plunges in fear of the curb, and the fluttering robes of the rider;

Soon, grown bold by despair, submits to the will of his master,

Tamer and tamer each hour, and at last, in the pride of obedience,

Answers the heel with a curvet, and arches his neck to be fondled,

Cowed by the need that maid grew tame; while the hero indignant

Tore at the fetters which held her: the brass, too cunningly tempered,

Held to the rock by the nails, deep wedged; till the boy, red with anger,

Drew from his ivory thigh, keen flashing, a falchion of diamond—

'Now let the work of the smith try strength with the arms of Immortals!'

Dazzling it fell; and the blade, as the vine-hook shears off the vine-bough,

Carved through the strength of the brass, till her arms fell soft on his shoulder.

Once she essayed to escape: but the ring of the water was round her,

Round her the ring of his arms; and despairing she sank on his bosom.

Then, like a fawn when startled, she looked with a shriek to the seaward.

'Touch me not, wretch that I am! For accursed, a shame and a hissing,

Guiltless, accurst no less, I await the revenge of the sea-gods. 300

Yonder it comes! Ah go! Let me perish unseen, if I perish!
Spare me the shame of thine eyes, when merciless fangs must tear me
Piecemeal! Enough to endure by myself in the light of the sunshine
Guiltless, the death of a kid!'
But the boy still lingered around her,
Loth, like a boy, to forego her, and wakened the cliffs with his laughter.
'Yon is the foe, then? A beast of the sea? I had deemed him immortal
Titan, or Proteus' self, or Nereus, foeman of sailors:
Yet would I fight with them all, but Poseidon, shaker of mountains,
Uncle of mine, whom I fear, as is fit; for he haunts on Olympus,
Holding the third of the world; and the gods all rise at his coming.

Unto none else will I yield, god-helped: how then to a monster

Child of the earth and of night, unreasoning, shapeless, accursed?'

'Art thou, too, then a god?'

'No god I,' smiling he answered,

'Mortal as thou, yet divine: but mortal the herds of the ocean,

Equal to men in that only, and less in all else; for they nourish

Blindly the life of the lips, untaught by the gods, without wisdom:

Shame if I fled before such!'

In her heart new life was enkindled,

Worship and trust, fair parents of love: but she answered him sighing.

'Beautiful, why wilt thou die? Is the light of the sun, then, so worthless,

Worthless to sport with thy fellows in flowery glades of the forest,

Under the broad green oaks, where never again shall I wander,

Tossing the ball with my maidens, or wreathing the altar in garlands,

Careless, with dances and songs, till the glens rang loud to our laughter.

Too full of death the great earth is already; the halls full of weepers,

Quarried by tombs all cliffs, and the bones gleam white on the sea-floor

Numberless, gnawn by the herds who attend on the pitiless sea-gods,

Even as mine will be soon: and yet noble it seems to me, dying,

Giving my life for the many, to save to the arms of their lovers

Maidens and youths for awhile: thee, fairest of all, shall I slay thee?

Add not thy bones to the many, thus angering idly the dread ones! 330

Either the monster will crush, or the sea-queen's self overwhelm thee,

Vengeful, in tempest and foam, and the thundering walls of the surges.

Why wilt thou follow me down? can we love in the black blank darkness?

Love in the realms of the dead, in the land where all is forgotten?

Why wilt thou follow me down? is it joy, on the desolate oozes,

Meagre to flit, grey ghosts in the depths of the grey salt water?

Beautiful! why wilt thou die, and defraud fair girls of thy manhood?

Surely one waits for thee longing, afar in the isles of the ocean.

Go thy way; I mine; for the gods grudge pleasure to mortals.'

Sobbing she ended her moan, as her neck, like a storm-bent lily,

Drooped with the weight of her woe, and her limbs sank, weary with watching,
Soft on the hard-ledged rock: but the boy, with his eye on the monster,
Clasped her, and stood, like a god; and his lips curved proud as he answered—
'Great are the pitiless sea-gods: but greater the Lord of Olympus;
Greater the Ægis-wielder, and greater is she who attends him.
Clear-eyed Justice, her name is, the counseller, loved of Athené;
Helper of heroes, who dare, in the god-given might of their manhood
Greatly to do and to suffer, and far in the fens and the forests
Smite the devourers of men, Heaven-hated, brood of the giants,
Twyformed, strange, without like, who obey not the golden-haired Rulers.

Vainly rebelling they rage, till they die by the swords of the heroes,

Even as this must die; for I burn with the wrath of my father,

Wandering, led by Athené; and dare whatsoever betides me.

Led by Athené I won from the grey-haired terrible sisters

Secrets hidden from men, when I found them asleep on the sand-hills,

Keeping their eye and their tooth, till they showed me the perilous pathway

Over the waterless ocean, the valley that led to the Gorgon.

Her too I slew in my craft, Medusa, the beautiful horror;

Taught by Athené I slew her, and saw not herself, but her image,

Watching the mirror of brass, in the shield which a goddess had lent me;

Cleaving her brass-scaled throat, as she lay with her adders around her,

Fearless I bore off her head, in the folds of the mystical goat-skin,

Hide of Amaltheié, fair nurse of the Ægis-wielder.

Hither I bear it, a gift to the gods, and a death to my foemen,

Freezing the seer to stone; so hide thine eyes from the horror.

Kiss me but once, and I go.'

Then lifting her neck, like a sea-bird

Peering up over the wave, from the foam-white swells of her bosom,

Blushing she kissed him: afar on the topmost Idalian summit

Laughed in the joy of her heart, far-seeing, the queen Aphrodité.

Loosing his arms from her waist he flew upward, awaiting the sea-beast. 370

Onward it came from the southward, as bulky and black as a galley,

Lazily coasting along, as the fish fled leaping before it;

Lazily breasting the ripple, and watching by sandbar and headland,

Listening for laughter of maidens at bleaching, or song of the fisher,

Children at play on the pebbles, or cattle that pawed on the sandhills.

Rolling and dripping it came, where bedded in glistening purple

Cold on the cold sea-weeds lay the long white sides of the maiden,

Trembling, her face in her hands, and her tresses afloat on the water.

As when an osprey aloft, dark-eyebrowed, royally crested,

Flags on by creek and by cove, and in scorn of the anger of Nereus 380

Ranges, the king of the shore; if he see on a glittering
shallow,
Chasing the bass and the mullet, the fin of a wallowing
dolphin,
Halting, he wheels round slowly, in doubt at the weight
of his quarry,
Whether to clutch it alive, or to fall on the wretch like
a plummet,
Stunning with terrible talon the life of the brain in the
hindhead:
Then rushes up with a scream, and stooping the wrath
of his eyebrows
Falls from the sky like a star, while the wind rattles
hoarse in his pinions.
Over him closes the foam for a moment; then from the
sand-bed
Rolls up the great fish, dead, and his side gleams white
in the sunshine.
Thus fell the boy on the beast, unveiling the face of
the Gorgon;

Thus fell the boy on the beast; thus rolled up the beast in his horror,

Once, as the dead eyes glared into his; then his sides, death-sharpened,

Stiffened and stood, brown rock, in the wash of the wandering water.

Beautiful, eager, triumphant, he leapt back again to his treasure;

Leapt back again, full blest, towards arms spread wide to receive him.

Brimful of honour he clasped her, and brimful of love she caressed him,

Answering lip with lip; while above them the queen Aphrodité

Poured on their foreheads and limbs, unseen, ambrosial odours,

Givers of longing, and rapture, and chaste content in espousals.

Happy whom ere they be wedded anoints she, the Queen Aphrodité!

Laughing she called to her sister, the chaste Tritonid Athené,
Seest thou yonder thy pupil, thou maid of the Ægis-wielder,
How he has turned himself wholly to love, and caresses a damsel,
Dreaming no longer of honour, or danger, or Pallas Athené?
Sweeter, it seems, to the young my gifts are; so yield me the stripling;
Yield him me now, lest he die in his prime, like hapless Adonis.'
Smiling she answered in turn, that chaste Tritonid Athené:
'Dear unto me, no less than to thee, is the wedlock of heroes;
Dear, who can worthily win him a wife not unworthy; and noble,
Pure with the pure to beget brave children, the like of their father.

Happy, who thus stands linked to the heroes who were,
and who shall be;
Girdled with holiest awe, not sparing of self; for his
mother
Watches his steps with the eyes of the gods; and his
wife and his children
Move him to plan and to do in the farm and the camp
and the council.
Thence comes weal to a nation: but woe upon woe,
when the people
Mingle in love at their will, like the brutes, not heeding
the future.'
Then from her gold-strung loom, where she wrought
in her chamber of cedar,
Awful and fair she arose; and she went by the glens of
Olympus;
Went by the isles of the sea, and the wind never ruffled
her mantle;
Went by the water of Crete, and the black-beaked fleets
of the Phœnics;

Came to the sea-girt rock which is washed by the surges for ever,

Bearing the wealth of the gods, for a gift to the bride of a hero.

There she met Andromeden and Persea, shaped like Immortals;

Solemn and sweet was her smile, while their hearts beat loud at her coming;

Solemn and sweet was her smile, as she spoke to the pair in her wisdom.

'Three things hold we, the Rulers, who sit by the founts of Olympus,

Wisdom, and prowess, and beauty; and freely we pour them on mortals;

Pleased at our image in man, as father at his in his children.

One thing only we grudge to mankind, when a hero, unthankful,

Boasts of our gifts as his own, stiffnecked, and dishonours the givers,

Turning our weapons against us. Him Até follows avenging;

Slowly she tracks him and sure, as a lyme-hound; sudden she grips him,

Crushing him, blind in his pride, for a sign and a terror to folly.

This we avenge, as is fit; in all else never weary of giving.

Come then, damsel, and know if the gods grudge pleasure to mortals.'

Loving and gentle she spoke: but the maid stood in awe, as the goddess

Plaited with soft swift finger her tresses, and decked her in jewels,

Armlet and anklet and earbell; and over her shoulders a necklace,

Heavy, enamelled, the flower of the gold and the brass of the mountain.

Trembling with joy she gazed, so well Hæphaistos had made it,

Deep in the forges of Ætna, while Charis his lady beside him,

Mingled her grace in his craft, as he wrought for his sister Athené.

Then on the brows of the maiden a veil bound Pallas Athené;

Ample it fell to her feet, deep-fringed, a wonder of weaving.

Ages and ages agone it was wrought on the heights of Olympus,

Wrought in the gold-strung loom, by the finger of cunning Athené.

In it she wove all creatures that teem in the womb of the ocean;

Nereid, siren, and triton, and dolphin, and arrowy fishes

Glittering round, many-hued, on the flame-red folds of the mantle.

In it she wove, too, a town where grey-haired kings sat in judgment;

Sceptre in hand in the market they sat, doing right by the people,

Wise: while above watched Justice, and near, far-seeing
Apollo.
Round it she wove for a fringe all herbs of the earth and
the water,
Violet, asphodel, ivy, and vine-leaves, roses and lilies,
Coral and sea-fan, and tangle, the blooms and the palms
of the ocean:
Now from Olympus she bore it, a dower to the bride of
a hero.
Over the limbs of the damsel she wrapt it: the maid still
trembled,
Shading her face with her hands; for the eyes of the
goddess were awful.
Then, as a pine upon Ida when southwest winds blow
landward,
Stately she bent to the damsel, and breathed on her:
under her breathing
Taller and fairer she grew; and the goddess spoke in
her wisdom.
'Courage I give thee; the heart of a queen, and the
mind of Immortals,

Godlike to talk with the gods, and to look on their eyes unshrinking;
Fearing the sun and the stars no more, and the blue salt water;
Fearing us only, the lords of Olympus, friends of the heroes;
Chastely and wisely to govern thyself and thy house and thy people,
Bearing a godlike race to thy spouse, till dying I set thee
High for a star in the heavens, a sign and a hope to the seamen,
Spreading thy long white arms all night in the heights of the æther,
Hard by thy sire and the hero thy spouse, while near thee thy mother
Sits in her ivory chair, as she plaits ambrosial tresses.
All night long thou wilt shine; all day thou wilt feast on Olympus,
Happy, the guest of the gods, by thy husband, the god-begotten.'

Blissful, they turned them to go: but the fair-tressed Pallas Athené
Rose, like a pillar of tall white cloud, toward silver Olympus;
Far above ocean and shore, and the peaks of the isles and the mainland;
Where no frost nor storm is, in clear blue windless abysses,
High in the home of the summer, the seats of the happy Immortals,
Shrouded in keen deep blaze, unapproachable; there ever youthful
Hebé, Harmonié, and the daughter of Jove, Aphrodité,
Whirled in the white-linked dance with the gold-crowned Hours and the Graces,
Hand within hand, while clear piped Phœbe, queen of the woodlands.
All day long they rejoiced: but Athené still in her chamber

Bent herself over her loom, as the stars rang loud to her singing,
Chanting of order and right, and of foresight, warden of nations;
Chanting of labour and craft, and of wealth in the port and the garner;
Chanting of valour and fame, and the man who can fall with the foremost,
Fighting for children and wife, and the field which his father bequeathed him.
Sweetly and solemnly sang she, and planned new lessons for mortals:
Happy, who hearing obey her, the wise unsullied Athené.

# SONGS, BALLADS,

ETC.

## THE TIDE ROCK.

How sleeps yon rock, whose half-day's bath is done,
With broad bright side beneath the broad bright sun,
Like sea-nymph tired, on cushioned mosses sleeping.
Yet, nearer drawn, beneath her purple tresses
From drooping brows we find her slowly weeping.
So many a wife for cruel man's caresses
Must inly pine and pine, yet outward bear
A gallant front to this world's gaudy glare.

## THE OUBIT.

I.

It was an hairy oubit, sae proud he crept alang;
A feckless hairy oubit, and merrily he sang—
'My minnie bad me bide at hame until I won my wings;
I shew her soon my soul's aboon the warks o' creeping things.'

II.

This feckless hairy oubit cam' hirpling by the linn,
A swirl o' wind cam' doun the glen, and blew that oubit in:
O when he took the water, the saumon fry they rose,
And tigg'd him a' to pieces sma', by head and tail and toes.

III.

Tak' warning then, young poets a', by this poor oubit's shame;
Though Pegasus may nicher loud, keep Pegasus at hame.
O haud your hands frae inkhorns, though a' the Muses woo;
For critics lie, like saumon fry, to mak' their meals o' you.

## THE STARLINGS.

I.

Early in spring time, on raw and windy mornings,
Beneath the freezing house-eaves I heard the starlings sing—
'Ah dreary March month, is this then a time for building wearily?
Sad, sad, to think that the year is but begun.'

II.

Late in the autumn, on still and cloudless evenings,
Among the golden reed-beds I heard the starlings sing—
'Ah that sweet March month, when we and our mates were courting merrily;
Sad, sad, to think that the year is all but done.'

Oh, thou hadst been a wife for Shakspeare's self!
No head, save some world-genius, ought to rest
Above the treasures of that perfect breast;
Or nightly draw fresh light from those keen stars
Through which thy soul awes ours: yet thou art bound—
Oh waste of nature!—to a craven hound;
To shameless lust, and childish greed of pelf;
Athené to a Satyr: was that link
Forged by The Father's hand? Man's reason bars
The bans which God allowed.—Ay, so we think:
Forgetting, thou hadst weaker been, full blest,
Than thus made strong by suffering; and more great
In martyrdom, than throned as Cæsar's mate.

## A MARCH.

Dreary East winds howling o'er us;
Clay-lands knee-deep spread before us;
Mire and ice and snow and sleet;
Aching backs and frozen feet;
Knees which reel as marches quicken,
Ranks which thin as corpses thicken;
While with carrion birds we eat,
Calling puddle-water sweet,
As we pledge the health of our general, who fares as rough as we:
What can daunt us, what can turn us, led to death by such as he?

## AIRLY BEACON.

I.

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
Oh the pleasant sight to see
Shires and towns from Airly Beacon,
While my love climbed up to me!

II.

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
Oh the happy hours we lay
Deep in fern on Airly Beacon,
Courting through the summer's day!

III.

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
Oh the weary haunt for me,
All alone on Airly Beacon,
With his baby on my knee!

## A FAREWELL.

I.

My fairest child, I have no song to give you;
No lark could pipe to skies so dull and grey:
Yet, ere we part, one lesson I can leave you
For every day.

II.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
Do noble things, not dream them, all day long:
And so make life, death, and that vast for-ever
One grand, sweet song.

## ODE TO THE NORTHEAST WIND.

Welcome, wild Northeaster!
Shame it is to see
Odes to every zephyr;
Ne'er a verse to thee.
Welcome, black Northeaster!
O'er the German foam;
O'er the Danish moorlands,
From thy frozen home.
Tired we are of summer,
Tired of gaudy glare,
Showers soft and steaming,
Hot and breathless air.

Tired of listless dreaming,
Through the lazy day:
Jovial wind of winter
Turn us out to play!
Sweep the golden reed-beds;
Crisp the lazy dyke;
Hunger into madness
Every plunging pike.
Fill the lake with wild fowl;
Fill the marsh with snipe;
While on dreary moorlands
Lonely curlew pipe.
Through the black fir-forest
Thunder harsh and dry,
Shattering down the snow flakes
Off the curdled sky.
Hark! The brave Northeaster!
Breast-high lies the scent,
On by holt and headland,
Over heath and bent.

Chime, ye dappled darlings,
Through the sleet and snow!
Who can over-ride you?
Let the horses go!
Chime, ye dappled darlings,
Down the roaring blast;
You shall see a fox die
Ere an hour be past.
Go! and rest to-morrow,
Hunting in your dreams,
While our skates are ringing
O'er the frozen streams.
Let the luscious South-wind
Breathe in lovers' sighs,
While the lazy gallants
Bask in ladies' eyes.
What does he but soften
Heart alike and pen?
'Tis the hard grey weather
Breeds hard English men.

What's the soft Southwester?
'Tis the ladies' breeze,
Bringing home their true loves
Out of all the seas:
But the black Northeaster,
Through the snow-storm hurled,
Drives our English hearts of oak
Seaward round the world!
Come! as came our fathers,
Heralded by thee,
Conquering from the eastward,
Lords by land and sea.
Come; and strong within us
Stir the Vikings' blood;
Bracing brain and sinew;
Blow, thou wind of God!

## TO G——.

A HASTY jest I once let fall—
As jests are wont to be, untrue—
As if the sum of joy to you
Were hunt and pic-nic, rout and ball.

Your eyes met mine: I did not blame;
You saw it: but I touched too near
Some noble nerve; a silent tear
Spoke soft reproach, and lofty shame.

I do not wish those words unsaid.
Unspoilt by praise and pleasure, you
In that one look to woman grew,
While with a child, I thought, I played.

Next to mine own beloved so long!
I have not spent my heart in vain.
I watched the blade; I see the grain;
A woman's soul, most soft, yet strong.

## SAINT MAURA.

A.D. 304.

THANK God! Those gazers' eyes are gone at last!
The guards are crouching underneath the rock;
The lights are fading in the town below,
Around the cottage which this morn was ours.
Kind sun, to set, and leave us here alone;
Alone upon our crosses with our God;
While all the angels watch us from the stars!
Kind moon, to shine so clear and full on him,
And bathe his limbs in glory, for a sign
Of what awaits him! Oh look on him, Lord!
Look, and remember how he saved thy lamb!
Oh listen to me, teacher, husband, love,
Never till now loved utterly! Oh say,
Say you forgive me? No—you must not speak:
You said it to me hours ago—long hours!

Now you must rest, and when to-morrow comes
Speak to the people, call them home to God,
A deacon on the Cross, as in the Church,
And plead from off the tree with outspread arms,
To show them that the Son of God endured
For them—and me. Hush! I alone will speak,
And wile away the hours till dawn for you.
I know you have forgiven me; as I lay
Beneath your feet, while they were binding me,
I knew I was forgiven then! When I cried
'Here am I, husband! The lost lamb returned,
All re-baptized in blood!' and you said, 'Come!
Come to thy bride-bed, martyr, wife once more!'
From that same moment all my pain was gone;
And ever since those sightless eyes have smiled
Love—love! Alas, those eyes! They made me fall.
I could not bear to see them bleeding, dark,
Never, no never to look into mine;
Never to watch me round the little room
Singing about my work, or flash on me

Looks bright with counsel.—Then they drove me mad
With talk of nameless tortures waiting you—
And I could save you! You would hear your love—
They knew you loved me, cruel men! And then—
Then came a dream; to say one little word,
One easy wicked word, we both might say,
And no one hear us, but the lictors round;
One tiny sprinkle of the incense grains,
And both, both free! And life had just begun—
Only three months—short months—your wedded wife!
Only three months within the cottage there—
Hoping I bore your child. . . .
Ah! husband! Saviour! God! think gently of me!
I am forgiven! . .

And then another dream;

A flash—so quick, I could not bear the blaze;
I could not see the smoke among the light—
To wander out through unknown lands, and lead
You by the hand through hamlet, port, and town,
On, on, until we died; and stand each day

To glory in you, as you preached and prayed
From rock and bourne-stone, with that voice, those
words,
Mingled of fire and honey—you would wake,
Bend, save whole nations! would not that atone
For one short word?—ay, make it right, to save
You, you, to fight the battles of the Lord?
And so—and so—alas! you knew the rest!
You answered me . . .
Ah cruel words! No! Blessed, godlike words!
You had done nobly had you struck me dead,
Instead of striking me to life!—the temptress! . .
'Traitress! apostate! dead to God and me!'——
'The smell of death upon me?'—so it was!
True! true! well spoken, hero! Oh they snapped,
Those words, my madness, like the angel's voice
Thrilling the graves to birth-pangs. All was clear.
There was but one right thing in the world to do;
And I must do it. . . Lord, have mercy! Christ!
Help through my womanhood: or I shall fail

Yet, as I failed before! . . I could not speak—
I could not speak for shame and misery,
And terror of my sin, and of the things
I knew were coming: but in heaven, in heaven!
There we should meet, perhaps—and by that time
I might be worthy of you once again—
Of you, and of my God. . . So I went out.

* * * * *

Will you hear more, and so forget the pain?
And yet I dread to tell you what comes next;
Your love will feel it all again for me.
No! it is over; and the woe that's dead
Rises next hour a glorious angel. Love!
Say, shall I tell you? Ah! your lips are dry!
To-morrow, when they come, we must entreat,
And they will give you water. One to-day,
A soldier, gave me water in a sponge
Upon a reed, and said, 'Too fair! too young!
She might have been a gallant soldier's wife!'
And then I cried, 'I am a soldier's wife!

A hero's!' And he smiled, but let me drink.
God bless him for it!
So they led me back:
And as I went, a voice was in my ears
Which rang through all the sunlight, and the breath
And blaze of all the garden slopes below,
And through the harvest-voices, and the moan
Of cedar-forests on the cliffs above,
And round the shining rivers, and the peaks
Which hung beyond the cloud-bed of the west,
And round the ancient stones about my feet.
Out of all heaven and earth it rang, and cried
'My hand hath made all these. Am I too weak
To give thee strength to say so?' Then my soul
Spread like a clear blue sky within my breast,
While all the people made a ring around,
And in the midst the judge spoke smilingly—
'Well? hast thou brought him to a better mind?'
'No! He has brought me to a better mind!'—
I cried, and said beside—I know not what—

Words which I learnt from thee—I trust in God
Nought fierce or rude—for was I not a girl
Three months ago beneath my mother's roof?
I thought of that. She might be there! I looked—
She was not there! I hid my face and wept.
And when I looked again, the judge's eye
Was on me, cold and steady, deep in thought—
'She knows what shame is still; so strip her.' 'Ah!'
I shrieked, 'Not that, Sir! Any pain! So young
I am—a wife too—I am not my own,
But his—my husband's!' But they took my shawl,
And tore my tunic off, and there I stood
Before them all. . . . Husband! you love me still?
Indeed I pleaded! Oh, shine out, kind moon,
And let me see him smile! Oh! how I prayed,
While some cried 'Shame!' And some 'She is too young!'
And some mocked—ugly words: God shut my ears.
And yet no earthquake came to swallow me.
While all the court around, and walls, and roofs,

And all the earth and air were full of eyes,
Eyes, eyes, which scorched my limbs like burning flame,
Until my brain seemed bursting from my brow:
And yet no earthquake came! And then I knew
This body was not yours alone, but God's—
His loan—He needed it: and after that
The worst was come, and any torture more
A change—a lightening; and I did not shriek—
Once only—once, when first I felt the whip—
It coiled so keen around my side, and sent
A fire-flash through my heart which choked me—then
I shrieked—that once. The foolish echo rang
So far and long—I prayed you might not hear.
And then a mist, which hid the ring of eyes,
Swam by me, and a murmur in my ears
Of humming bees around the limes at home;
And I was all alone with you and God.
And what they did to me I hardly know;
I felt, and did not feel. Now I look back,
It was not after all so very sharp—

So do not pity me. It made me pray;
Forget my shame in pain, and pain in you,
And you in God: and once, when I looked down,
And saw an ugly sight—so many wounds!
'What matter?' thought I. 'His dear eyes are dark;
For them alone I kept this skin so white—
A foolish pride! As God wills now. 'Tis just.'
But then the judge spoke out in haste, 'She is mad,
Or fenced by magic arts! She feels no pain!'
He did not know I was on fire within:
Better he should not; so his sin was less:
Then he cried fiercely, 'Take the slave away,
And crucify her by her husband's side!'
And at those words a film came on my face—
A sickening rush of joy—was that
That my reward? I rose, and tried to go—
But all the eyes had vanished, and the judge;
And all the buildings melted into mist;
So how they brought me here I cannot tell.
Here, here, by you, until the judgment-day,

And after that for ever and for ever!
Ah! If I could but reach that hand! One touch!
One finger tip, to send the thrill through me
I felt but yesterday!—No! I can wait:—
Another body!—Oh, new limbs are ready,
Free, pure, instinct with soul through every nerve,
Kept for us in the treasuries of God.
They will not mar the love they try to speak,
They will not fail my soul, as these have done!

* * * * *

Will you hear more? Nay—you know all the rest:
Yet those poor eyes—alas! they could not see
My waking, when you hung above me there
With hands outstretched to bless the penitent—
Your penitent—even like The Lord Himself—
I gloried in you!—like The Lord Himself!
Sharing His very sufferings, to the crown
Of thorns which they had put on that dear brow
To make you like Him—show you as you were!
I told them so! I bid them look on you,

And see there what was the highest throne on earth—
The throne of suffering, where the Son of God
Endured and triumphed for them. But they laughed;
All but one soldier, grey, with many scars;
And he stood silent. Then I crawled to you,
And kissed your bleeding feet, and called aloud—
You heard me! You know all! I am at peace.
Peace, peace, as still and bright as is the moon
Upon your limbs, came on me at your smile,
And kept me happy, when they dragged me back
From that last kiss, and spread me on the cross,
And bound my wrists and ancles—Do not sigh:
I prayed, and bore it: and since they raised me up
My eyes have never left your face, my own, my own,
Nor will, till death comes! . . .
Do I feel much pain?
Not much. Not maddening. None I cannot bear.
It has become like part of my own life,
Or part of God's life in me—honour—bliss!
I dreaded madness, and instead comes rest;

Rest deep and smiling, like a summer's night.
I should be easy, now if I could move . . . .
I cannot stir. Ah God! these shoots of fire
Through all my limbs! Hush, selfish girl! He hears
you!
Who ever found the cross a pleasant bed?
Yes; I can bear it, love. Pain is no evil
Unless it conquers us. These little wrists, now—
You said, one blessed night, they were too slender,
Too soft and slender for a deacon's wife—
Perhaps a martyr's:—You forgot the strength
Which God can give. The cord has cut them through;
And yet my voice has never faltered yet.
Oh! do not groan, or I shall long and pray
That you may die: and you must not die yet.
Not yet—they told us we might live three days . . .
Two days for you to preach! Two days to speak
Words which may wake the dead!

* * * * *

Hush! is he sleeping?

They say that men have slept upon the cross;
So why not he? . . . Thanks, Lord! I hear him
breathe:
And he will preach thy word to-morrow!—save
Souls, crowds, for Thee! And they will know his worth
Years hence—poor things, they know not what they
do!—
And crown him martyr; and his name will ring
Through all the shores of earth, and all the stars
Whose eyes are sparkling through their tears to see
His triumph—Preacher! Martyr!—Ah—and me?
If they must couple my poor name with his,
Let them tell all the truth—say how I loved him,
And tried to damn him by that love! Oh Lord!
Returning good for evil! and was this
The payment I deserved for such a sin?
To hang here on my cross, and look at him
Until we kneel before Thy throne in heaven!

## THE WATCHMAN.

I.

'WATCHMAN, what of the night?'
'The stars are out in the sky;
And the merry round moon will be rising soon,
For us to go sailing by.'

II.

'Watchman, what of the night?'
'The tide flows in from the sea;
There's water to float a little cockboat
Will carry such fishers as we.'

III.

'Watchman, what of the night?'
'The night is a fruitful time;
When to many a pair are born children fair,
To be christened at morning chime.'

## THE WORLD'S AGE.

I.

Who will say the world is dying?
Who will say our prime is past?
Sparks from Heaven, within us lying,
Flash, and will flash till the last.
Fools! who fancy Christ mistaken;
Man a tool to buy and sell;
Earth a failure, God-forsaken,
Anteroom of Hell.

II.

Still the race of Hero-spirits
Pass the lamp from hand to hand;
Age from age the Words inherits—
'Wife, and Child, and Fatherland.'

Still the youthful hunter gathers
Fiery joy from wold and wood;
He will dare as dared his fathers
Give him cause as good.

III.

While a slave bewails his fetters;
While an orphan pleads in vain;
While an infant lisps his letters,
Heir of all the ages' gain;
While a lip grows ripe for kissing;
While a moan from man is wrung;
Know, by every want and blessing,
That the world is young.

# EARLY POEMS.

## IN AN ILLUMINATED MISSAL.

I WOULD have loved: there are no mates in heaven:
I would be great: there is no pride in heaven;
I would have sung, as doth the nightingale
The summer's night aneath the moonè pale:
But saintès hymnes alone in heaven prevail.
My love, my song, my skill, my high intent,
Have I within this seely book y-pent:
And all that beauty which from every part
I treasured still alway within mine heart,
Whether of form or face angelical,
Or herb or flower, or lofty cáthedral,
Upon these sheets below doth lie y-spred,
In quaint devices deftly blazonèd.
Lord, in this tome to thee I sanctify
The sinful fruits of worldly fantasy.

## THE WEIRD LADY.

I.

The swevens came up round Harold the Earl,
Like motes in the sunnés beam;
And over him stood the Weird Lady,
In her charmèd castle over the sea,
Sang 'Lie thou still and dream.'

II.

'Thy steed is dead in his stall, Earl Harold,
Since thou hast bid with me;
The rust has eaten thy harness bright,
And the rats have eaten thy greyhound light,
That was so fair and free.'

III.

Mary Mother she stooped from heaven;
She wakened Earl Harold out of his sweven,
To don his harness on;
And over the land and over the sea
He wended abroad to his own countrie,
A weary way to gon.

IV.

O but his beard was white with eld,
O but his hair was gray;
He stumbled on by stock and stone,
And as he journeyed he made his moan
Along that weary way.

V.

Earl Harold came to his castle wall;
The gate was burnt with fire;
Roof and rafter were fallen down,
The folk were strangers all in the town,
And strangers all in the shire.

VI.

Earl Harold came to a house of nuns,
And he heard the dead-bell toll;
He saw the sexton stand by a grave;
'Now Christ have mercy, who did us save,
Upon yon fair nun's soul.'

VII.

The nuns they came from the convent gate
By one, by two, by three;
They sang for the soul of a lady bright
Who died for the love of a traitor knight:
It was his own lady.

VIII.

He stayed the corpse beside the grave;
'A sign, a sign!' quod he.
'Mary Mother who rulest heaven
Send me a sign if I be forgiven
By the woman who so loved me.'

IX.

A white dove out of the coffin flew;
Earl Harold's mouth it kist;
He fell on his face, wherever he stood;
And the white dove carried his soul to God
Or ever the bearers wist.

## PALINODIA. 1841.

Ye mountains, on whose torrent-furrowed slopes,
And bare and silent brows uplift to heaven,
I envied oft the soul which fills your wastes
Of pure and stern sublime, and still expanse
Unbroken by the petty incidents
Of noisy life: Oh hear me once again!

Winds, upon whose racked eddies, far aloft,
Above the murmur of the uneasy world,
My thoughts in exultation held their way:
Whose tremulous whispers through the rustling glade
Were once to me unearthly tones of love,
Joy without object, wordless music, stealing
Through all my soul, until my pulse beat fast
With aimless hope, and unexpressed desire—

Thou sea, who wast to me a prophet deep
Through all thy restless waves, and wasting shores,
Of silent labour, and eternal change;
First teacher of the dense immensity
Of ever-stirring life, in thy strange forms
Of fish, and shell, and worm, and oozy weed:
To me alike thy frenzy and thy sleep
Have been a deep and breathless joy: Oh hear!

Mountains, and winds, and waves, take back your child!
Upon thy balmy bosom, Mother Nature,
Where my young spirit dreamt its years away,
Give me once more to nestle: I have strayed
Far through another world, which is not thine.
Through sunless cities, and the weary haunts
Of smoke-grimed labour, and foul revelry
My flagging wing has swept. A mateless bird's
My pilgrimage has been; through sin, and doubt,
And darkness, seeking love. Oh hear me, Nature!
Receive me once again: but not alone;

No more alone, Great Mother! I have brought
One who has wandered, yet not sinned, like me.
Upon thy lap, twin children, let us lie;
And in the light of thine immortal eyes
Let our souls mingle, till The Father calls
To some eternal home the charge He gives thee.

## A NEW FOREST BALLAD.

I.

Oh she tripped over Ocknell plain,
And down by Bradley Water;
And the fairest maid of the forest side
Was Jane, the keeper's daughter.

II.

She went and went through the broad grey lawns
As down the red sun sank,
And chill as the scent of a new-made grave
The mist smelt cold and dank.

III.

'A token, a token!' that fair maid cried,
'A token that bodes me sorrow;
For they that smell the grave by night
Will see the corpse to-morrow.

IV.

'My own true love in Burley Walk
Does hunt to-night, I fear;
And if he meet my father stern,
His game may cost him dear.

V.

'Ah, here's a curse on hare and grouse,
A curse on hart and hind;
And a health to the squire in all England,
Leaves never a head behind.'

VI.

Her true love shot a mighty hart
Among the standing rye,
When on him leapt that keeper old
From the fern where he did lie.

VII.

The forest laws were sharp and stern,
The forest blood was keen;
They lashed together for life and death
Beneath the hollies green.

VIII.

The metal good and the walnut wood
Did soon in flinders flee;
They tost the orts to south and north,
And grappled knee to knee.

IX.

They wrestled up, they wrestled down,
They wrestled still and sore;
Beneath their feet the myrtle sweet
Was stamped to mud and gore.

X.

Ah cold pale moon, thou cruel pale moon,
That starest with never a frown
On all the grim and the ghastly things
That are wrought in thorpe and town;

XI.

And yet cold pale moon, thou cruel pale moon,
That night hadst never the grace
To lighten two dying Christian men
To see one another's face.

XII.

They wrestled up, they wrestled down,
They wrestled sore and still:
The fiend who blinds the eyes of men
That night he had his will.

XIII.

Like stags full spent, among the bent
They dropped awhile to rest;
When the young man drove his saying knife
Deep in the old man's breast.

XIV.

The old man drove his gunstock down
Upon the young man's head;
And side by side, by the water brown,
Those yeomen twain lay dead.

XV.

They dug three graves in Lyndhurst yard;
They dug them side by side;
Two yeomen lie there, and a maiden fair,
A widow and never a bride.

## THE RED KING.

The King was drinking in Malwood Hall,
There came in a monk before them all;
He thrust by squire, he thrust by knight,
Stood over against the dais aright;
And, 'The word of the Lord, thou cruel Red King,
The word of the Lord to thee I bring.
A grimly sweven I dreamt yestreen;
I saw thee lie under the hollins green,
And thorough thine heart an arrow keen;
And out of thy body a smoke did rise,
Which smirched the sunshine out of the skies;
So if thou God's anointed be
I rede thee unto thy soul thou see.

For mitre and pall thou hast y-sold,
False knight to Christ, for gain and gold;
And for this thy forest were digged down all,
Steading and hamlet and churches tall;
And Christés poor were ousten forth,
To beg their bread from south to north.
So tarry at home, and fast and pray,
Lest fiends hunt thee in the judgment day.'

The monk he vanished where he stood;
King William sterte up wroth and wod;
Quod he, 'Fools' wits will jump together;
The Hampshire ale and the thunder weather
Have turned the brains for us both, I think;
And monks are curst when they fall to drink.
A lothly sweven I dreamt last night,
How there hoved anigh me a griesly knight,
Did smite me down to the pit of hell;
I shrieked and woke, so fast I fell.

There's Tyrrel as sour as I, perdie,
So he of you all shall hunt with me;
A grimly brace for a hart to see.'

The Red King down from Malwode came;
His heart with wine was all a-flame,
His eyne were shotten, red as blood,
He rated and swore, wherever he rode.

They roused a hart, that grimly brace,
A hart of ten, a hart of grease,
Fled over against the kingés place.
The sun it blinded the kingés ee,
A fathom behind his hocks shot he:
'Shoot thou,' quod he, 'in the fiendés name,
To lose such a quarry were seven years' shame,'
And he hove up his hand to mark the game.
Tyrrel he shot full light, God wot;
For whether the saints they swerved the shot,
Or whether by treason, men knowen not,

But under the arm, in a secret part,
The iron fled through the kingés heart.
The turf it squelched where the Red King fell;
And the fiends they carried his soul to hell,
Quod 'His master's name it hath sped him well.'

Tyrrel he smited full grim that day,
Quod 'Shooting of kings is no bairns play;'
And he smote in the spurs, and fled fast away.
As he pricked along by Fritham plain,
The green tufts flew behind like rain;
The waters were out, and over the sward:
He swam his horse like a stalwart lord;
Men clepen that water Tyrrel's ford.
By Rhinefield and by Osmondsleigh,
Through glade and furze brake fast drove he,
Until he heard the roaring sea;
Quod he, 'Those gay waves they call me.'
By Mary's grace a seely boat
On Christchurch bar did lie afloat;

He gave the shipmen mark and groat,
To ferry him over to Normandie,
And there he fell to sanctuarie;
God send his soul all bliss to see.

And fend our princes every one,
From foul mishap and trahison;
But kings that harrow Christian men,
Shall England never bide again.

THE END.

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